GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3618
ANSWERED ON:23.03.2017
Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions
Tripathi Shri Sharad

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

a) the total number of women representatives elected for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the country, State/UT-wise including Uttar Pradesh;
b) whether any study has been conducted regarding qualitative changes in socio-economic condition of women in view of their growing participation in PRIs;
c) if so, the details and the outcome thereof, State/UT-wise; and
d) the strategic policy formulated by the Government to improve socio-economic condition of women in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
(SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA)

(a): As per the information received from the States/UTs, there are about 14.394 lakh Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) including women sarpanches in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). A statement showing number of EWRs, State-wise including Uttar Pradesh is given at Annexure.

(b) & (c): A nationwide study on EWRs in Panchayats commissioned by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) was published in 2008. The study assessed the empowerment of EWRs in various aspects, including enhancement of the self-esteem, confidence and decision making abilities of EWRs. The study indicated that the participation of women in Gram Sabhas had increased, and attention was being given to women related issues such as drinking water, sanitation and child−sex ratio. The study reported that EWRs had made efforts to encourage girls' enrolment in schools and mitigate domestic violence. Besides, the issues concerning women and children, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to women, sanitation and children are given focussed attention with the women taking over leadership at local levels.

(d): Article 243D of the Constitution ensures participation of women in PRIs by mandating not less than one-third reservation for women out of total number of seats to be filled by direct election and number of offices of chairpersons of Panchayats. Government has been encouraging increased involvement of the women in the functioning of Panchayats through active participation in the Gram Sabha meetings for preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans and various schemes being implemented by the Panchayats. MoPR has also issued advisories to the States to facilitate holding of separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings prior to Gram Sabha meetings, enhancing the presence and participation of women in Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings, and to curb the cases of proxy attendance by relatives of EWRs.

The Ministry of Women & Child Development implements several schemes/programmes such as Swadhar and Short Stay Home, Working Women Hostels, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) for the welfare and empowerment of women. Further, the Ministry has also approved Scheme for setting up Women Helpline and One Stop Centre which aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counselling, temporary support services to women affected by violence.